

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Banno et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,313,574; "Banno").

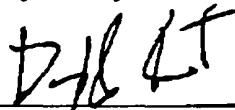
The Applicants respectfully submit that the claims of the present application are allowable over Banno because the priority date of the present application precedes the filing date of Banno. The present application has an international filing date of January 25, 2000 based on International Application PCT/JP00/00354. The International Application claims priority under the Paris Convention of Japanese Application Number 11-16524, which was filed on January 26, 1999. Therefore, the effective filing date of the above-referenced application is January 26, 1999, which is the filing date of the priority Japanese application. Our 903 form indicates that the USPTO received a copy of the priority document. Nevertheless, the Applicants, in accordance with MPEP § 706.02(b) hereby request that the priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 to Japanese application 11-16524 be perfected. In accordance with MPEP § 706.02(b), the priority document was filed as part of the original application papers on September 25, 2000. In addition, enclosed with this supplemental response is a certified translation of the priority document. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request that the claim to priority be perfected.

A comparison of the filing date of Banno to the foreign priority document shows that Banno et al was filed in the United States on July 16, 1999, which is after the priority date of January 16, 1999 of the above-referenced application. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that Banno et al. does not qualify

as prior art against claims 1-3 of the present application. Accordingly, claims 1-3 of are allowable in their present form.

In view of the aforesaid, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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